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ABSTRACT

The daily newspaper was chosen for its flexibility and diversity to provide the materials for the instructional strategies outlined in this teaching guide. The lessons, intended for adaptation to all grade levels, are organized into seven sections: reading readiness, phonics and structural analysis, comprehension skills, life skills, reading in the content areas, written communication skills, and creative writing. The sections include an introductory discussion of the skills to be taught in that unit and a series of lesson plans. Each lesson plan stresses a particular skill, lists the newspaper materials involved, and suggests specific student activities such as letter and picture exploration, problem solving, synthesizing information, keeping diaries, reading advertisements, and analysing political cartoons. (HAI)

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LORAIN CITY SCHOOLS

LORAIN, OHIO

NEWSPAPER: A READING TEACHER

Presented by

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Thursday, May 4th 2:00 - 3:00 Session

ALBERT THOMAS CONVENTION CENTER, Room 110

Respectfully submitted to

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

for PUBLICATION

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It is appropriate to acknowledge and recognize the significant contributions of Lorain City Schools' classroom teachers and administrative staff. The ideas presented here represent a collage of ideas shared professionally between colleagues.

INTRODUCTION

The search for valuable instructional materials is endless. In the context of tight budgets, staff cutbacks and the problems of remaining "current", the challenge of matching student and material in terms of need and appropriateness becomes even more challenging.

When an agreement can be reached with a local newspaper to supply papers to its neighboring schools, a whole new world of flexibility in approach and materials opens to the instructional staff. Content that is familiar and locally relevant increases motivation as well as comprehension.

This paper explores the newspaper's diversity as an instructional tool articulated easily across grades and content area boundaries. It offers teachers and reading specialists background, rationale and specific examples of instructional strategies and materials within the scope of any newspaper. The reading supervisor is offered enough material for a newspaper staff development session/seminar from which can evolve locally developed materials and approaches.

NEWSPAPER: A READING TEACHER

The NEWSPAPER is one instrument that provides a flexible resource for instruction. With its endless variety and daily rebirth, the newspaper in the hands of a creative and skilled teacher is transformed into a valuable instructional tool whose limits are unknown. Whether its use is for simple letter recognition practice, phonetic review, comprehension exercises, survival reading skills or complex written communication, utility exists from Kindergarten to Senior High. To illustrate this point, consider the following sampler:

Kindergarten - *LETTER Exploration/PICTURE Exploration*

Primary - *Recognition of elements of PHONETIC and STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS*

Intermediate - *Identification of the key elements of LITERAL COMPREHENSION (WHO, is doing WHAT, WHEN and WHERE) in both news articles and pictures*

Jr. High - *Application of reading skills to CONTENT AREA READING of higher levels of comprehension*

Sr. High - *Utilization of LIFE SKILLS synthesizing the processes of CRITICAL COMPREHENSION and WRITTEN COMMUNICATION*

The newspaper offers a fresh alternative in both instructional approach and material. The teacher can choose to use the newspaper to REVIEW, REINFORCE and EXTEND almost any skill. An extra plus is that often the material used has a local flavor that is especially meaningful to its audience.

This paper is organized to show the diversity of content and range of applicability of the NEWSPAPER'S utility:

SECTION I: Reading Readiness

SECTION II: Phonics and Structural Analysis

SECTION III: Comprehension Skills

SECTION IV: Life Skills

SECTION V: Reading in the Content Areas

SECTION VI: Written Communication Skills

SECTION VII: Creative Writing

Many of the instructional strategies that follow articulate across all grade levels as well as across the topic areas identified. The only limitation imposed upon the reader is the reader's own creativity. It is intended that these ideas should serve as a launching pad for others as they are personalized to meet the needs of individual situations.

Section I: Reading Readiness

The importance of the development of readiness activities at all levels cannot be overstated. To bypass them, would create less efficient use of later instructional time.[1]

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[1] Walter B. Barbe, Reading Skills Check List and Activities (N.Y.: Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1976), p. 5.

Students learn skills at different rates and will therefore need varying amounts of repetition in order to maintain them.

The newspaper offers a wide variety of opportunities for practice and reinforcement of skills. The following are selected examples:

1. Skill: LETTER Matching

   Source: Headlines or Other Large Print

   Lesson: Teacher writes students' name on name-card in manuscript.

   Student finds letters that match and pastes them beneath. If unable to manipulate scissors and paste, student circles letters in headlines and connects them with lines to form his/her name.

2. Skill: Recognition of PLACES

   Source: Pictures in Newspaper

   Lesson: Teacher writes the word WHERE? on a paper.

   Student will find pictures of places to answer the question WHERE?

3. Skill: Recognition of MOOD

   Source: Pictures of FACES

   Lesson: Students will build a collage of faces depicting moods such as happiness, sadness, surprise etc.

4. Skill: Predicting FUTURE ACTION

   Source: Comic Strip that is almost wordless

Lesson: Teacher mounts all comic frames but the final one on the front of construction paper; final frame is mounted on reverse side.

Students will tell the Main Idea of each picture predicting what the main idea of final picture will be.

5. *Skill: Recognition of NUMERALS*

Source: FOOD and CAR ADS with large numerals

Lesson: Student will circle numerals as indicated by teacher (e.g., 0-9); if students can manipulate scissors and paste, students will build a number line from 0-10 or....

6. *Skill: CLASSIFICATION*

Source: PICTURES in newspaper

Lesson: Student will find pictures to meet classification requirements outlined by teacher (e.g., teacher writes CARS, PEOPLE, NUMERALS on three different papers; students will find pictures/examples to mount under each title.)

7. *Skill: LETTER Exploration and Discovery*

Source: Large letters in HEADLINES and ARTICLE TITLES

Lesson: Teacher will list letter or letters to be explored on chalkboard.

Student will cut out various sizes and styles of characters to represent letter(s) designated by teacher.

Section II: Phonics and Structural Analysis Skills

Phonics instruction is one piece of a total reading program and is given for a single reason: to teach children how to figure out the identity of written words on the basis of their spellings. Phonics helps the child to use letter--sound relationships to identify unfamiliar words.[2]

To analyze the structure of a word is to view a whole as the sum of its parts. It is those "parts" that when integrated into a student's skill bank enable that student to decode with accuracy and efficiency.

The newspaper's variety on both format and style provides the teacher with many opportunities for review and reinforcement.

1. Skill: Recognition of phonic or structural analysis elements (e.g., consonants, blends, vowels, digraphs, diphthongs, prefixes, suffixes, roots or syllables.)

   Source: HEADLINES, TITLES of ARTICLES, ADVERTISEMENTS etc.

   Lesson: Teacher designates the examples to be collected on chalkboard. (e.g., BLENDS with R: br, cr, dr...etc.)

   Student will circle the words containing these and/or cut out examples for a prearranged grid such as the one below:

ELEMENT	WORD	SENTENCE
br ⋮	bright	The star was bright

[2] Dolores Durkin, Phonics, Linguistics and Reading (N.Y.: Teachers College Press, 1972), p. 1.

2. Skill: Recognition of SYLLABLES

Source: HEADLINES

Lesson: Students will draw "slash-marks" in appropriate places to indicate syllables. The teacher may want to request that the vowel sound in each syllable be identified to reinforce the notion of a vowel sound being present in each syllable.

3. Skill: Application of specific PREFIX recognition

Source: ANY printed matter in newspaper

Lesson: Student will search for a given prefix (e.g., those prefixes meaning NOT) and give examples of usage. (Same procedure is appropriate for suffixes as well.)

4. Skill: Recognition of INFLECTED ENDINGS and ROOTS

Source: ANY printed matter in newspaper

Lesson: Student will circle and/or cut out words with endings; the student will write the root word indicating the spelling changes (if any) necessary for the ending.

SECTION III: Comprehension Skills

There is general agreement with Smith that comprehension is a general term which embraces many specific labels for "thought getting processes."[3]

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[3] Nila Banton Smith, Reading Instruction for Today's Children (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963) p. 264.

It is sometimes helpful to think of comprehension in terms of levels: (1) Literal; (2) Interpretive; (3) Critical. There is an implied hierarchy here with literal encompassing simple recall of factual data answering the questions:

- *WHO?*
- *did WHAT?*
- *WHEN?*
- *WHERE?*

Interpretive comprehension requires "reading between the lines" and interpreting the author's intended meaning. Critical comprehension addresses itself to higher order problem solution, logical thinking processes and synthesizing both facts and opinions.

To TEACH comprehension not TEST it remains a challenge. The newspaper offers a fresh approach with a daily rebirth of materials. MAIN IDEA is easily recognized by classroom teachers as a KEY COMPREHENSION SKILL. It focuses on understanding and synthesizes full utility of all phonetic and structural analysis skills learned to date.

One perspective of MAIN IDEA suggests that a three-pronged approach be employed to teach this skill: MAIN IDEA taught by (1) Summary: (2) Title; and (3) Theme. Some ideas that fit this model are included here.*

1. *Skill: MAIN IDEA - (Summary of)*

   Source(s):
   - *newspaper PICTURE*
     - *WHO?*
     - *is doing WHAT?*
     - *WHEN?*
     - *WHERE?*

* *CTB/McGraw-Hill--Prescriptive Reading Inventory (1972.)*

. newspaper ARTICLE (usually first paragraph)
.. WHO?
.. is doing WHAT?
.. WHEN?
.. WHERE?

. newspaper GRAPH or MAP

. newspaper CARTOON

. newspaper ADVERTISEMENT

Lesson: Student will summarize orally or in writing as directed by the teacher.

2. Skill: MAIN IDEA - (Title)

Source(s): . newspaper HEADLINES
.. WHO?
.. is doing WHAT?
.. WHEN?
.. WHERE

. photograph CAPTIONS
.. WHO?
.. is doing WHAT?
.. WHEN?
.. WHERE?

Lesson: Student will rewrite or reword the headline or caption.

3. Skill: MAIN IDEA - (Theme)

Source(s): . newspaper HEADLINES
.. topics

. newspaper SECTIONS
.. sports
.. society
.. news
.. cartoons
.. classified

Lesson: Student will collect articles or samples to reflect a composite of the sections identified by the teacher.

4. Skill: FACT vs. OPINION

   Source: News articles contrasted with Editorials

   Lesson: Student will identify facts by underlining and opinions by circling the appropriate phrases or sentences.

5. Skill: FACT vs. OPINION

   Source: Political Cartooons

   Lesson: Student will analyze the cartoon for the statement of opinion noting any symbolism and its implied meaning.

6. Skill: EVENT SEQUENCE

   Source: Comic Strip Frames

   Lesson: Student will identify frame order (i.e., first, next, last etc).

7. Skill: LITERAL COMPREHENSION

   Source: TV Schedule Summaries

   Lesson: Student will analyze summaries in terms of WHO? did WHAT? WHEN? and WHERE?

8. Skill: Inferred MAIN IDEA

   Source: Simple Comic Strip (Sunday's are preferred because of greater number of frames and full color).

   Lesson: Student will summarize the MAIN IDEA of the first three frames of the strip and USE that information to infer MAIN IDEA of the final frames

9. Skill: MAIN IDEA

Source: Various examples of Print Size and Style to show that relative size often indicates KEY points and details.

Lesson: Student will analyze articles and advertisements in terms of letter size and emphasis.

10. Skill: MAIN IDEA

Source: News Article

Lesson: Student will summarize a news article using the summary questions: WHO? did WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

Student will generate an original title for article that reflects its MAIN IDEA.

11. Skill: Literal Comprehension Questions (i.e., WHO? did WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?)

Source: Pictures

Lesson: Student will build a collage around the concept of WHO? (by displaying PEOPLE)
did WHAT? (by displaying ACTION)
WHEN? (by displaying words or pictures of TIME)
WHERE? (by displaying words or pictures of PLACES)

12. Skill: CAUSE and EFFECT

Source: Pictures and News Articles

Lesson: Student will identify the cause and effects of those causes as seen in the news articles.

13. Skill: REALITY AND FANTASY

Source: Any article or picture that is appropriate for contrast of reality and fantasy.

Lesson: Student will write a paragraph comparing reality with fantasy.

14. Skill: IDENTIFICATION of DETAILS

Source: Usually a regular feature has a title, key word and details.

Lesson: Student will identify the MAIN IDEA, KEY WORD and at least one DETAIL for each section of news article or feature.

15. Skill: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Source: Sports Section

Lesson: Student will find examples of figurative language in sports lead headlines (e.g., Kings CROWN the Spartans.)

16. Skill: BUILDING MAIN IDEA with EVENT SEQUENCE

Source: Sunday Comics

Lesson: Student will take Frame #1 and final frame of the comic strip and spacing them apart, the student will write the MAIN IDEA of the action that took place in moving from Frame #1 to the final frame.

Student will follow one of the serial comic strips for a period of time--perhaps, four weeks; student will summarize week by week the action of the characters and in turn, project future actions for the coming week.

Student will block out the dialogue between the characters and instead, replace it with original dialogue as appropriate.

Section IV: Life Skills

Life skills (or survival skills as they are sometimes called) deal with the real world and all of its day-to-day demands and complexities. Life skills call for the APPLICATION of the skills learned in the milieu of academia. The newspaper offers and ever-changing kaleidoscope of opportunities to try our those essential life skills. A few examples follow:

1. Skill: COMPARATIVE FOOD SHOPPING

Source: Food advertisements (usually Wednesday and/or Thursday Newspapers)

Lesson(s):

For the following products, "shop" at Store #1 and Store #2 and find the difference in prices:

PRODUCT	STORE #1	PRICE	STORE #2	PRICE	DIFFERENCE
1 # MARGARINE 1 Dozen EGGS 5 # SUGAR 1 gal. MILK 1 head LETTUCE 1 loaf BREAD . . .	Pic and Pay	$.89	Sparkle	$.95	$.06

2. Skill: ASSESSING and SATISFYING PERSONAL NEEDS

Source: Classified Section

Lesson: Student will...
- . locate an apartment for $_____ month
- . locate transportation for under $_____
- . locate three possible job opportunities to match his/her potential skills

3. Skill: Writing a RESUME for job application

   Source: Classified Section

   Lesson: Student will respond in writing to the requirements of the position advertised.

4. Skill: Translating ABBREVIATIONS Used in Classified Section

   Source: Classified Section

   Lesson: Student will take five classified advertisements and write out the full words and sentences in place of the abbreviated format.

5. Skill: Completing an ORDER BLANK

   Source: Any Order Blank Found in the Paper

   Lesson: Student will complete the information called for on the order blank.

6. Skill: Reading an ADVERTISEMENT

   Source: Any Advertisement

   Lesson: Student will answer questions as generated by the teacher.

7. Skill: Reading a TV Schedule

   Source: TV Schedule

   Lesson: Student will analyze TV Schedules in terms of such items as:
   - On which channels is the news seen at 6:00?
   - What program directly follows the news?
   - If you tune in on Channel ____ at 8:20 p.m. what program will be in progress?

Section V: Reading in the Content Areas

Teachers become frustrated when their students fail to achieve success in reading content materials. Many teachers at the secondary level believe that the reading skills taught in elementary school should be adequate for successful reading in various content areas.[4]

Earlier attempts ARE being made to acquaint students with reading as they encounter it in the content areas. The following skills utilizing content related materials found in the NEWSPAPER articulate well across many levels in terms of recognition, review, reinforcement or extension.

Science:

1. Skill: Reading WEATHER MAPS

   Source: Weather Map

   Lesson: Student will make a daily log of the weather predictions for one week noting its accuracy and inaccuracy.

   Student will chart the highs and lows.

2. Skill: Building KEY Science CONCEPTS

   Source: Syndicated Science Articles

   Lesson: Student will make a collection of the science articles (e.g., Leokum's--Tell Me Why) to share with small groups or total class.

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[4] Harold L. Herber, Teaching Reading in the Content Areas (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 6.

3. Skill: Relating Written Reports to Life EXPERIENCES and OBSERVATIONS

Source: Reports of Moon Phases and Visible Planets

Lesson: Student will read of moon phases and visible planets and then follow through with observation as appropriate with local weather conditions.

English

1. Skill: PARTS of SPEECH

Source: Any Part of Newspaper

Lesson: Student will circle to identify or cut out to form a collage of

- nouns
- verbs
- adjectives
- adverbs

.
.
.

2. Skill: PUNCTUATION Usage

Source: Any Part of Newspaper

Lesson: Student will circle to identify or cut out to form a collage showing uses of:

- period
- question mark
- exclamation mark
- comma
- colon
- quotation marks
- hyphen
- asterisk

3. Skill: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Source: Obituaries/Engagement/Wedding Announcements

Lesson: Student will write one of each of the above for himself/herself or for an acquaintance.

4. Skill: PROOFREADING

Source: Front Page

Lesson: Student will PROOFREAD the front page and circle all spelling errors.

Social Studies

1. Skill: Following an ISSUE Over Time

Source: ANY news articles related to one issue over time

Lesson: Student will collect news articles related to one issue over time summarizing each in terms of:
- WHO?
- did WHAT?
- WHEN?
- WHERE?

with consideration to the inferential skills of WHY? and HOW?

2. Skill: Learning Scope of the Key Concepts of:
- International
- National
- State
- Local

Source: News Articles

Lesson: Student will collect articles of each category.

Student will place articles in circles of concentricity to show relationships of one to the others.

3. Skill: Recognizing GEOGRAPHICAL LOCALE

Source: News Articles

Lesson: Student will mark on an outline map of the world or United States the source of the news article.

Student will collect data of geographical source of articles over time and note frequency of given areas.

Section VI: Written Communication Skills

To communicate fully in our society today, many different kinds of writing tasks are demanded. To help students organize their ideas and write them in a logical sequence requires some attention to structure.

One strategy that has been employed sucessfully is to provide students with the WHO? did WHAT? WHEN? and WHERE? and ask them to fill in the details to formulate a concise lead-paragraph for a news article. Readiness for this activity includes the examination of lead-paragraphs in news articles in terms of the elements of WHO? did WHAT? WHEN? and WHERE? with some attention given to the inferential question WHY? This strategy is not unique in its employment of the newspaper as a tool for teaching written communication skills. Some additional ideas follow:

1. Skill: Using CAPITALIZATION

Source: ANY Newspaper Article or Advertisement

Lesson: The student will collect examples of different uses of capitalization and generate an example of his/her own that is parallel to it.

2. Skill: Writing a LETTER expressing a point of view

   Source: Editorial Page

   Lesson: Student will generate a letter to the editor that expresses personal opinion in regard to a person, place or thing.

3. Skill: Using Adjectives to DESCRIBE Action

   Source: Sports Page

   Lesson: The student will circle all of the words found on the Sports Page that describe.

4. Skill: Using NEGATIVES

   Source: ANY Newspaper Article or Advertisement

   Lesson: Student will insert negatives to change the meaning of an article completely.

Section VII: Creative Writing

Torrance[5] states that the creative thinking process involves such strong, impelling human motivations as the following:

> Curiosity and wanting to know in the face of wonder, incompleteness, confusion, and complexity, disharmony, disorganization, or the like
>
> Simplification of structure of diagnosing the difficulty by synthesizing known information, forming new combinations, and identifying gaps
>
> Elaborating and diverging by producing new alternatives, new possibilities
>
> Judging, evaluating, checking, and testing possibilities

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[5] E. P. Torrance, Guiding Creative Talent (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962) as cited in his introduction to the GINN 360 Reading Series Teacher's Manuals (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1969), p. 18.

Discarding unsuccessful, erroneous, and unpromising solutions

Choosing the most promising solution and making it attractive or aesthetically pleasing

Communicating the results to others

Creative thinking propels creative writing. Utilizing some of these motivations, we can translate them to instructional strategies using the newspaper as the vehicle:

1. Skill: Communicating through a DIARY

   Source: Horoscope

   Lesson: Student will keep a record of their horoscopes for two weeks writing beneath it the actual events of the day.

   Student will sort out, judge and evaluate the accuracy of a daily personal horoscope mess

2. Skill: Creative PROBLEM SOLVING

   Source: Life Advice Column

   Lesson: Student will read letters sent to life advice column without seeing responses given by columnist (e.g., Ann Landers, Abby etc.)

   Student will create responses appropriate to the problem/solution.

3. Skill: Creative Synthesizing of Known Information

   Source: Historical Data

   Lesson: Student will create a front page that portrays a historical event in time.

   Student will include other news and advertisements that would be concurrent to that day.

4. Skill: Composition of RANSOM NOTES

   Source: Characters from Newsprint

   Lesson: Student will compose RANSOM NOTES using characters from newsprint for all letters and numerals.

5. Skill: Creative Interpretation of a NEWS CHARACTER

   Source: News Articles about People

   Lesson: Student will write an article about themselves as they play the role out and assume the responsibility of a character on the news.

6. Skill: Creation of Local Political CARTOON

   Source: Local News Issue

   Lesson: Student will react to a local news issue in terms of symbolism and irony translating both to CARTOON form.

Summary Statement:

These ideas serve only to whet the appetite of the educator. Individual situations and needs will come into play as the newspaper's utility in education is defined locally. With each teacher's use and experience in the program, a new dimension is added and the creative multiplier effect seen. The possibilities are endless.

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